DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 219 CS 205 646

AUTHOR Atwood, Roy Alden
TITLE Handwritten Newspapers on the Iowa Frontier, 1844-54.
PUB DATE Aug 80
NOTE 24p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (63rd, Boston, MA, August 9-13, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Influences: *Journalism: *Newspapers: *State History
IDENTIFIERS *Frontier History: *Iowa

ABSTRACT

Journalism on the agricultural frontier of the Old Northwest territory of the United States was shaped by a variety of cultural forces and environmental factors and took on diverse forms. Bridging the gap between the two cultural forms of written correspondence and printed news was a third form: the handwritten newspaper. Between 1844 and 1854 there were at least three handwritten newspapers published in the frontier town of Washington, Iowa. They were the "Domestic Quarterly Review," the "Washington Shark," and the "Quarterly Visitor." Though this genre was not peculiar to the agricultural frontier, the appearance of these particular papers can be understood in terms of their demographic and biographic contexts. During its first 15 years, Washington was without a printing press. The town had developed as an agricultural center rather than as a trade or business center, and because of its relative isolation, its population had remained modest in size. Possibly because of their relative isolation, the editors and their readers turned to the handwritten papers as one means of recreating the cultural world they had known. The editors, who were lawyers, politicians, and educators, may have tried to create a communications environment that could embody their own cultural and professional values and provide a mode of discourse to which they had grown accustomed. (Author/FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED188219

STUDENT COMPETITION
Warren C. Price Award

HANDWRITTEN NEWSPAPERS ON THE IOWA FRONTIER, 1844-54

By

Roy Alden Atwood
Doctoral Candidate

School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Iowa

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Roy Alden Atwood
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented to the History Division, Association for Education in Journalism Annual Convention, Boston, Massachusetts, August 1980.

CS205646

Between 1844 and 1854 there were at least three and possibly five or more handwritten newspapers published in the fledgling frontier town of Washington in southeastern Iowa. The three known papers were the Domestic Quarterly Review, edited by Samuel A. James, the Quarterly Visitor, edited by Daniel C. Stover, and the Washington Shark, co-edited by Nathan Littler and Richard B. McMillan.

These manuscript newspapers provide an example of the diversity of forms of frontier journalism. Though this genre was not peculiar to the agricultural frontier of the Old Northwest,[1] the handwritten newspapers of this early county seat community are suggestive of some of the cultural forces and contextual constraints that shaped journalism on the frontier. To understand this particular form of frontier journalism within its geographic, demographic and biographic contexts is the purpose of this study.[2]

Nathan Littler (1825-1888), co-editor of the Washington Shark, considered the April 1, 1844 issue of the Domestic Quarterly Review of S.A. James (1823-1908) to be "without doubt the first document published in the county that at all approximated in dignity of appearance, manner and matter of regular newspaper issue."[3] According to Littler, the Review was a "12 column sheet, 3 wide columns to the page, and the pages were in size 13 by 21 inches," and contained "probably as much matter in it as are found in regularly printed newspaper sheets of the same size."[4]

In the first issue, James described his Review as a "complete family, Young Lady or Gentleman's newspaper" devoted to "Literature, Amusement and Particular Intelligence."[5] The first Review lived up to its billing:

> On the first page was the Carrier's address, a well written document, which was followed with a short but sensible article directed to the town loafers. An original and amusing ghost story occupied the remainder of the first, and nearly half of the second page. The remainder of the second page and part of the third was occupied by an address delivered before the Young Men's Lyceum, in commemoration of Washington's birthday at Iowa City, Feb. 22, 1843, by William R. Harrison, Esq., who was subsequently one of the early lawyers in Washington. The address was copied from the Iowa Capital Reporter of Iowa City of the date March 4, 1843. The balance of the sheet was filled with short, pithy, original and selected articles.[6]

In the closing article of the Review, James mentioned that the paper was "written and published at the low price of $1.00 a year, invariably in advance, and will be mailed to subscribers so as to reach them on the first day of each quarter in any part of the United States."[7] He finished his announcement with a plea to other newspaper editors: "Editors will confer a favor by giving the above (with this notice) an insertion."[8]

It is perhaps safe to assume that the initial issue of the Review involved a sufficient number of copies to be distributed to editors and subscribers, if any. Whether or not James actually did produce multiple copies or simply made one or two and had them passed around is unclear, but from his announcement it seems clear that he intended to write multiple copies. Whether he wrote those copies alone or with assistance is also unclear, although it would seem likely that if multiple copies were published, scribal assistance would have been necessary.

In the extant copy of the Quarterly Visitor, Daniel Stover wrote that

> The printing office, publishing the "Quarterly Review," has removed to Sigourney in Keokuk Co.[9]

This reference to James, who moved to Keokuk County to establish the county

seat there, seems to suggest that he had a well-organized operation. The Keokuk County History of 1880, which made liberal use of interviews with James and was published during his lifetime, claims that he issued three numbers of his handwritten newspaper.[10] The county history mentions, however, that James lived in a small log cabin with his family for some time after his move, so it seems doubtful that the "printing office" referred to by Stover involved much more than the holographic skills of James and perhaps his wife, Sarah.

Like the Review, the Quarterly Visitor was a four page paper with three columns on each of its 13 by 20 inch pages. The name of the paper was sketched in bold letters across the top of the first page and there were large, hand-drawn headlines running throughout the paper (see Figure I). The Visitor not only modelled itself after printed newspapers, it also ran stories and anecdotes gleaned from printed Iowa newspapers.[11]

The front page of the Visitor, published sometime around the end of June, 1844, was mostly poems and short, moralistic tales. The second page carried three editorial items (one which attacked the political neutrality of the Review), a report on an extra session of the Iowa legislature, three news items about rain, wheat and wind, a humorous story of someone's misfortunes while seeking a claim, a biographical sketch of Henry Clay and two brief news stories. The third page continued the biographical descriptions of "the most distinguished statesmen now living" (Clay, Martin Van Buren, John C. Calhoun, Richard M. Johnson, James Buchanan and John Tyler). The rest of the page had a lengthy article about the organization of Keokuk County, a letter to the editor (dated Washington, June 25, 1844) and five short news items. Included on the third page was a map of Keokuk County showing rivers, townships and sections. "S.A. James'

ITEMS

Mr. Bateman has, in Nauvoo, stated that he has often heard of this "Farm Limited of the Globe" but that he never heard anyone say any thing about the "Hind you tell."—

The annual expense in Flour in the United States is 2 100 000 Bales, of which there is about 300 000 bales manufactured annually into fabrics in the United States, the balance is exported.

There is raised annually in the United States 330 millions of bushels of Wheat, and Rising 63 millions of barrels of flour.

A small boy one day starting out to catch some fish, Old Thomas, the Lame, his mother told him to "fish for French" After fishing some time, he pulled out a cat fish, thing much provoked he pulled off the cat from his hook and, shaked it back into the water, saying— "When I go a Eating, I go a Eating! but when I go a Fishing, I go a Fishing!!"

In 1843 there was, up and down the Mississippi River, 250 Millions of Dollars worth of property 100 millions of which was agricultural product.

It is said that women are commanded to kiss the men, in the scriptures, except in the "Golden Rule" which says— "Do unto men, as you would have them to do unto you." (The Ill to passalive inferiors)

Women is said to be like a jew harp, because she is nothing without a tongue, and must be pressed to the lips. (Then she's music for the ear.)

Answer to a "puzzle" in "Nauvoo" Read, first, from left to right, then from right to left, line about, as— "O! may their hearts by love united, &c.

"Expense, haint, and Sore head!" as the Dog said when he broke through his Stye.

"Why do you not hold your head as I do?" inquired an aristocratic lawyer, of a laboring farmer.— "Squire," replied the farmer, "look at that field of grain, all the valuable heads hang down the mind, while those that have nothing in them, stand upright like yours".

This was certainly a damning and good hit.

Love. The mixing of the mind love, is, love of delight: it is Celestial origin, and not surpassed in beauty and communion for me.

High Water

By the last mail, we received intelligence that the Mississippi River has receded from the shore of St Louis 19 feet, and now runs along the Illinois Bluffs, the Missouri has been so high that the Bank opposite its mouth was washed away, and that the main channel of the River, through the American Bottom and comes into the River again at the mouth of Cahokia.

The American Bottom has been entirely under water for some 6 or 8 weeks.

The population of Nauvoo, from the returns of the census taken in May last, is 23 000. In 1840 the population was 12 000. So in 4 years there has been an increase of nearly one half. (11 000)

Serious Accident

Mr John Jackson was drowned in Crooked Creek 18 miles South of this place, on the 19th day of June. The particulars of the case are as follows. Mr J. was building a barn in that region and had a raising upon the 18th, he went home on the 18th and on the 19th with six or seven other men went in a swimming in the Creek at being very high, he and 2 of the men were just landing about in the bottom where the water was 3 or 4 feet deep, as they could only swim four strokes, and he unfortunately got into a deep hole, and strangled, and drowned. The good swimmers went in the main south 40 or 50 rods off, but were so frightened, when they got to where he was sunk, that they were unable to do any thing, and he was not missed for one hour, so that he could not be brought to life. His father was drowned in a similar way 4 years ago.

On hearing of the accident the Washington Lessee went at the room of Mr Stringer & got in the same arrangement to have the corpse brought to town as this was the only case in which to be belonged.

On motion of Mr Harmon— Mr Baldwin, Houston, and S. C. Stone were appointed to bring up the corpse.

On motion of Mr Baldwin a committee of 3 be appointed to draw up the form and funeral.

On motion of Mr Stringer the members of the Legion wear a crape on the left arm 13 days.

OBITUARY.

Died in this place, on the 18th day of June Mr. L. Stone, Sheriff of Hancock County, after a short illness. The death of Mr. S. is much lamented by all those acquainted with him. He came here in early settlement of the County, and has been Sheriff of the County for some time. His death will not only be felt by his father, brethren, and neighbours, but as a business man. He left behind him a blooming widow, and a numerous family to bewail his early departure from this life.

HYMENEAL.

Married, on last week, on the 25th of March Mr. James Clark to Miss Elizabeth Jackson. In mentioning the above notice, we also received the usual "cents complimentary" "he can not point without Cloke." "To Clark as a considerably made, and with no the on reconciled this hard. Amen and good neighbour.

Married on Pickle Creek on the 5th March, by William Cracchman of this place, Mr. Alfred Lagatta Signalline, all C. L. a practicing Attorney of the 2d Judicial District of this Territory.

Married on the 27th day of April M. James City Mr A. C. Spencer Bridge to Miss Lucy Ann Wilson, the late Mr William Black, Smith of that City. Second— A long life to our post master.

"If wedding intelligence be joyful news
"Then joyful indeed be when pastor can send."

There is strength in Virtue, more than the consciousness of wise, and comforting life in the midst of troubles and difficulties.

(Quarterly Visitor, Summer 1844, p. 4, top of column 2 and 3)

claim" appeared at the center of the map. The last page was one-third poetry and two-thirds news items. Included in the news items were two longer stories; the first was a "Serious Accident" story of a drowning, and the second was an obituary (see Figure I).

The extant copy of the Quarterly Visitor contained roughly three types of material: news features and editorials.[12] News stories accounted for a total of 81.5 column inches or 35 percent of the total available inches. Sixty percent of these news stories were devoted to local and state news. Features accounted for 191.75 column inches or 39 percent of the total and editorials took up the remining 38 inches or 16 percent of the total space. Of the 72 items included in the Visitor, only 18 dealt specifically with issues outside the local community. Like the Review, the Visitor carried no advertisements (see Table I).

Several things about the extant copy of the Visitor suggest that there was an earlier number which might have pre-dated the April 1 issue of the Review. First, there is absent from the pages of the Visitor any hint that this was a new paper. Second, the language of "An Apology" seems to indicate that the editor was concerned about a promise made earlier, possibly in another issue, that he was failing to keep.

> Our paper was not issued as soon as we did intend, as we were on a tour to the purchase when our "press and type" should have been plying. Yet we hope that our patrons will not take any serious thoughts in relation to the few days disappointment.[13]

But the most compelling evidence for a number pre-dating the extant copy of the Visitor and the Review is contained in a short item included on page four (see Figure I):

> Answer to a "puzzle" in "No. one," Read, first, from left to right, then from right to left; line about, as--"O! may those hearts by love united," &c.[14] (Emphasis added)

If this is indeed a reference to a previous issue, it means that not only

TABLE I

AN INVENTORY OF
THE CONTENT OF THE QUARTERLY VISITOR
OF JUNE 1844

Category	Number of items	Column inches	Percent of total inches
Features	27	91.75	39
Local news	19	49.50	21
National news	18	32.00	14
Editorials	8	38.00	16
Missing*	?	24.00	10
Totals	72	235.25	100

*The extant copy of the Quarterly Visitor was donated to the State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa City with three separate areas cut out. Included in the missing sections was the top four inches in the third column of the front page which no doubt would have contained the issue number and date. The same missing portion also cut an editorial in half on the second page. The editorial dealt primarily with the political position of Samual A. James and his Domestic Quarterly Review. The content of the other missing portions on the third and fourth pages is not determinable at this point.

did the Visitor have at least two numbers published, but that contrary to Littler the Visitor and not the Review was probably the first handwritten newspaper in Washington.

The Visitor offers little insight into the manner in which it was produced or distributed or what sort of readership it enjoyed. Even though Stover refers to his "patrons" in the "Apology" mentioned above, it is unclear whether or not the paper actually had paying subscribers or if this was wishful thinking. Because many of the early accounts of Washington's history, including Littler's, fail to make any reference to either Daniel Stover or the Quarterly Visitor, it may be that the latter is closer to the truth.

The account of Littler and McMillan's Washington Shark by Littler also fails to clarify whether or not their own circa 1850 publication is closer to being a gossip sheet or a newspaper. As Littler described it, the Shark was "a folio with regular columns of ordinary size, tolerably fine pen type, published on the four sides of one sheet of cap paper."[15] What makes it difficult to classify is that, by Littler's own account, the Shark used pseudonyms frequently in its reports and the editors tried to keep their own identity secret. Though these things tend to make the Shark appear more like a gossip sheet than a newspaper, Littler claimed that it did contain "general news and current literature," market reports, advertisements and society news.[16]

The Shark was also locally oriented. According to Littler, it appeared only one copy at a time so any wide distribution can be ruled out. Instead, the Shark's readership was limited to those who could gather in public places.

> This Shark was put into the mail box when none were present. It was directed to some one whom the editors felt would give it the widest publicity. Usually, when the paper came, its owner would go to the most frequented store in town, and taking his seat on a stool or mail keg, would proceed to read to the crowd that quickly assembled, the contents, advertisements and all.[17]

In addition to the physical limitations placed on the newspaper's distribution, the paper was geared only to those who had first-hand knowledge of local people and events. Without the background knowledge gained by participation in local affairs, much of the Shark would have been unintelligible. According to Littler,

> Special attention, however, was given to the doings at the social parties and other gatherings of the young people. If anything awkward or amusing occurred at these assemblages, which were frequent in early times, a full and animated report, highly wrought up, would come out in the next issue giving circumstances and hints so plainly that those in attendance knew very well who the parties were though the real names were not given.[18]

Littler claimed that the Shark appeared frequently, and when it did it was the "sensation of the town until its contents became familiar to all the citizens."[19]

By Littler's account, most people were amused by the lighthearted approach the paper took, but the Shark did bite on occasion.

> Some, however, to whom the jokes and caricatures fit most closely, were outrageously vexed and the only reason the editors were not punished, corporally at least, was the fact that they were safely incognito.[20]

Littler also claims that the Shark would attack "any and everything going on to which the editors were opposed or which was opposed to the best interests of the community."[21]

Other handwritten newspapers in Washington along the order of the Shark may have existed. At the conclusion of Littler's description of his paper he said, "Occasionally afterwards, other papers of a similar character came out, but none of them achieved the popularity of the Shark."[22] Beyond this statement, however, there is no mention of the existence of other holographic newspapers after 1850 in the Washington area. If Littler was

referring to a similarity in production as well as content, there may have been five or more handwritten papers.

To sum up, these handwritten productions contained news, features and editorials that were tailored primarily for the local residents of the city of Washington and its immediate environs. Though it is unclear precisely how many issues or copies of each issue were released, it does seem certain that there were multiple issues of all three known papers and that, at least for the Review and the Visitor, several copies of each issue were published. While the editors apparently modelled their work after the printed newspapers of the day to some degree, these papers did not follow the examples of the advertisers, booster sheet and political party organs. These handwritten publications instead were oriented to the diverse issues and interests of this infant frontier community.

When these three locally-oriented papers hit the streets of Washington in 1844, ten printed newspapers were in existence in the Iowa Territory (see Table II). The Washington area was surrounded by counties whose larger cities had newspapers fairly early. There were newspapers in Iowa City, Davenport, Bloomington (or Muscatine), Fort Madison and Burlington by 1844, and these newspapers were able to reach Washington within a relatively short time after their date of publication.[23] Thus, printing presses were within 30 miles of the city of Washington, and printed news was available to the city and county of Washington while it was still fresh.

Despite its closeness to cities with printing presses, Washington nevertheless was one of two county seats, among the 57 Iowa counties established on or before 1850, that had a 15-year lag between the time the city was established and the time it had its first printed newspaper. This was the longest wait for any of the 57 county seats.[24] Washington

TABLE II

EARLY IOWA NEWSPAPERS*

Year	Established	Discontinued	In existence
1836	1	0	1
1837	2	0	3
1838	2	2	3
1839	1	0	4
1840	2	0	6
1841	6	1	11
1842	1	3	9
1843	2	1	10
1844	1	1	10
1845	1	2	9
1846	2	1	10
1847	5	1	14
1848	6	0	20
1849	5	2	23
1850	7	1	29
1851	6	2	33
1852	5	5	33
1853	6	1	38
1854	15	4	49
1855	16	9	56
1856	41	15	82
1857	24	11	95
1858	20	17	98
1859	22	19	101
1860	23	20	104
Total:	222	118	104

*All figures taken from David Mott, "Early Iowa Newspapers," Annals of Iowa, 3rd series, XVI(January 1928), pp. 161-233, and do not include the holographic newspapers.

was quite close to cities with printing presses, but the city ended up being one of the last of those early county seats to get its own press.

One factor that might account for the 15-year absence of printing as well as the advent of handwritten newspapers in Washington was a localism fostered by the geography of the Washington County area (see Figure II). The county is about 30 miles from the Mississippi River and is sandwiched between the Iowa River to the east, the Skunk River to the south, and the English River to the north. Laced across the county is a network of small streams and creeks. Ordinarily, rivers and streams served as the major thoroughfares, especially where the soil made road building and travel difficult. Given that there were few passable roads in the southeastern region of the Iowa Territory, the navigable rivers and streams were relied upon as the principal arteries for transportation.

Washington County, however, had only one navigable river: the Iowa. The Skunk was virtually unnavigable where it passed through the county, and the English could only accommodate very small craft where it fed into the Iowa. In fact, the county's plentiful waterways had the tendency of isolating the county from the rest of the territory instead of providing avenues to and from the outside world. The steep banks and deep beds of the English and Skunk rivers were major obstacles for overland travel into or out of the county the year round. And for the most part, the streams that criss-crossed the county were too small for watercraft yet large enough to create fording problems. As Stover's "Serious Accident" story in the Visitor exemplifies, river accidents and drownings were a grim part of early Washington county life.

Attempts were made to alleviate these transportation problems through several government-financed road and bridge building projects.[25] For

FIGURE II

Map drawn by J. Paige Atwood

example, an act passed by the territorial legislature on January 17, 1840 required all men age 20 to 50 to work three days a year on public roads or pay $1.50 a day. Regularly scheduled stage coach and mail routes were planned for the county by the legislature in 1841 and eventually served the county as the major public transportation avenues until the railroad came to Washington in 1858. Nevertheless, there were few good roads and bridges in the county, and river crossings were risky even up to the turn of the century.

When the commissioners who were appointed by the territorial legislature to establish the Washington county seat decided on its location in 1839, the site was chosen because it was near the geographic center of the county. There the city of Washington was created ex nihilo. Because it was not located on or even near a major river or transportation route, the city of Washington developed not as a trade or business center but as an agricultural-support center.[26] During its first 20 years or so, Washington had few major businesses and they were geared primarily toward the agricultural demands of the immediate area. Likewise, the population was modest in size. By 1850, the city's population was only 326.[27] And because many of the early newspapers were dependent on job printing, advertising revenues and subscriptions, the absence of an established business community and large population base could hardly have been a lure to prospective printers and newspaper publishers.[28] Indeed, it is perhaps more than a coincidence that within a year after two railroads, the "Ram's Horn" and the "Iowa Western," planned to extend lines into Washington County, and the county residents approved the sale of $100,000 worth of stock for the railroad's construction, that the first printed newspaper, the Washington Argus appeared (1854).

Coupled with these problems of geography, business and population was Washington's close proximity to Iowa City's large printing industry. The quickest route to Washington from the east was to travel up the Iowa River to Iowa City and then follow the roads back south for 30 miles. This meant that many newcomers to the territory probably passed through Iowa City en route to the areas near Washington. But because Iowa City was the territorial and state capital during this period, it was especially attractive to printers and publishers in search of steady and abundant work. According to the census manuscripts from Johnson County in 1850, Iowa City had nine printers, two publishers and one bookbinder. Washington had none. By the time Washington had its first printed newspaper in 1854, Iowa City already had witnessed the establishment of at least nine newspapers.[30] Washington seems to have existed in the shadow of the Iowa City printing industry.[31]

It was under these conditions and within these constraints that the early Washington editors published their manuscript newspapers. These editors had remarkably similar backgrounds and experiences, and to varying degrees their lives were woven together by their identity as lawyers, politicians and educators within a community of farmers, laborers and tradesmen. Neither farmers nor major land holders, the four editors of the handwritten newspapers took their place on Iowa's agricultural frontier as some of the early leaders in the public life of the Washington community.

Daniel Stover, editor of the Quarterly Visitor, was a lawyer and had started practice in Washington with his brother sometime in 1840, a year after their arrival in Iowa City from Indiana. According to a report published in the Iowa Capitol Reporter in July 1844, Stover served as the secretary of the Democratic Convention held in Washington that year, and

was nominated as the Democratic candidate for the Washington County Commissioner's Clerk. During the period that Stover edited the Visitor, his brother was the district court clerk in Washington. Being two of only about ten lawyers in the county at the time, the Stover brothers held several important governmental posts in Washington and later in Keokuk County.[32]

Samuel James, editor of the Domestic Quarterly Review, studied law with William R. Harrison, a prominent area lawyer and a close relative of Daniel Stover, in Washington during the winter of 1843-1844. At the beginning of the 1844 territorial legislative term, James was appointed as the clerk of the district court in Keokuk County with a mandate to organize the seat of justice there. It was during the spring after his study of law under Harrison and his appointment as the Keokuk County court clerk that James issued the Review. By July, James had moved to Sigourney, the county seat he helped to establish. James served as that city's first postmaster and held that post again from 1855 until President Lincoln's death.[33]

It was during his second term as postmaster under Lincoln that James became one of two handwritten newspaper editors to be involved with a printed paper. James served as interim editor and co-editor with the proprietor, A.S. Bailey, of the Keokuk County News (a "Republican Family Journal") between December 14, 1860 and November 15, 1861.

The other handwritten newspaper editor who continued to be involved with the newspaper profession was Nathan Littler of the Shark. Though Littler did not have the law background of James and Stover, he did lead an active public life. He was elected to a two-year term as constable of Washington in the spring of 1850, the year the Shark first appeared. In 1852 he was elected justice of the peace and served at that post until he moved to the Washington County town of Richmond. While in Richmond,

Littler was elected as a representative to the Tenth General Assembly of Iowa. He returned to Washington in 1869 and was elected county supervisor for one term. During this time he wrote a history of Washington County which appeared serially in the Washington Gazette. In addition to editing the Washington Shark while constable and writing the history for the Gazette while county supervisor, Littler served as a correspondent for the reorganized Washington County Press when he lived in Richmond.

Littler was also deeply involved with education. Beginning in 1843, he taught school a few miles southeast of Washington. In the winter of 1852, he taught at the district school in Washington. Twice he was involved with the establishment of a college in the city. The first attempt was in 1867, but it failed for lack of funds. The second was successful. Washington Academy was founded in 1872 by Littler and others and it ran until 1910. Littler also served as a member of the board of trustees of Central University (College) in Pella for several years.[34]

Richard B. McMillan (1823-1898), co-editor of the Washington Shark with Littler, lived in Washington initially from 1846 to 1855. During this period he was a county assessor and township clerk. He left Washington in 1855 and moved about the county and state for a time. Eventually he moved to Linn County, Kansas in 1872. During his six years in Kansas, he served one term as a state legislator and as a county superintendent of public schools. Around the time of his retirement, McMillan returned to Washington.[35]

Though McMillan did not pursue a career in journalism, he did have some influence on early journalism in eastern Iowa. McMillan and his younger brother, Horace Greeley McMillan, had moved to Washington together. While Richard McMillan was editing the Shark, Horace was living with his brother. It was no doubt there that Horace received his first exposure to journalistic

practice. In 1898, the year Richard died, Horace Greeley McMillan purchased the Cedar Rapids Republican. Eventually, he owned two Iowa dailies and a weekly farm journal.[35] The McMillan brothers thus played an active role in the development of journalism in Washington and eastern Iowa.

Precisely what prompted these four editors to publish papers in the absence of a printing press remains unclear. It is possible, based on the political involvement of the editors, that the papers were created to serve their differing political interests. The papers themselves, however, did not emphasize political affairs even though they carried some items of political significance. It is possible, based on the editors' involvement in the business life of the Washington community, that these manuscript newspapers were intended to attract people and businesses to the Washington community. The lack of any overt boosterism in the papers themselves, their limited distribution and their strong local orientation makes such promotional motives seem unlikely. The handwritten papers may also have been published to test the market as to the feasibility of investing in a printing press and of making a newspaper enterprise profitable.[37] James' appeal in the Domestic Quarterly Review to other newspaper editors to promote his paper lends some support to this idea, but it is unclear whether the editors of the other handwritten papers shared James' ambitions.

Lorraine Washburn's study of the manuscript newspapers on Utah's southern frontier suggested that because of their extreme isolation, the editors and their patrons turned to handwritten papers as one means of recreating the cultural world they had known.[38] It is possible then, the relative isolation of the Washington community may have fostered similar motivations among the editors and subscribers there. It is also possible, based on the identity of the editors as lawyers, politicians and educators,

that these men represented a distinct group or class within their agricultural frontier social order and consequently shared a common interest in the newspaper as a mode of public expression especially well-suited to their professional perspectives and goals. These men may have tried to create a communications environment that could embody their cultural and professional values and facilitate a mode of discourse to which they had grown accustomed. Until further research is completed, however, each of these explanations remains speculative.

Regardless of the intentions of the editors, these handwritten newspapers represent something of a bridge between two cultural forms: written correspondence and printed news. As such, the handwritten newspapers of the Iowa frontier community of Washington suggest that journalism on the frontier was shaped by a variety of cultural forces and environmental conditions, and that it took on a diversity of forms. The Washington, Iowa newspapers of 1844 to 1854 were one form of frontier journalism in which the "press and type" were never plied.

FOOTNOTES

[1]In the 1860s and 1880s there were apparently several handwritten newspapers published on Utah's frontier. Papers were issued in Parowan, Manti, Mount Pleasant and Dixie. For a brief discussion of the Dixie papers, see: Lorraine T. Washburn, "Culture in Dixie," Utah Historical Quarterly, 29 (July 1961), pp. 259-260. There were also handwritten publications for church young people organizations during the 1880s in Hyrum and Orderville. Cf. Mark A. Pendleton, "The Orderville United Order of Zion," Utah Historical Quarterly, 7 (October 1939), p. 151. All of these papers point to the possibility that handwritten newspapers were not an uncommon phenomenon in early frontier settlements.

[2]Because only one copy of a Washington handwritten newspaper has survived, the June issue of the Quarterly Visitor, several different types of sources became important for this study. Two county histories, one written by Nathan Littler and the other containing interviews with Samuel James, were the principal sources for the descriptions of the Domestic Quarterly Review and the Washington Shark. Topographical maps, legislative records, newspaper accounts and county histories were used in discerning the geographical problems of the Washington County region. Demographic information was compiled from federal census records for 1840, 1850 and 1860, and territorial and state census returns for 1838, 1840, 1844, 1846, 1847, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852, 1854, 1856 and 1859. Biographic data appeared in state and city records, county histories, autobiographies, newspaper stories and obituaries. Printed newspapers near Washington County published between 1840 and 1860, including the Iowa Capitol Reporter, the Bloomington Herald and Burlington Hawk-Eye, were examined for background information about the Washington community, the handwritten newspapers and their editors.

[3]Nathan Littler, History of Washington County, 1835-1875, ed. by Edna Jones (Washington, Ia.: Jonathan C. Clark, 1977), p. 221.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 222.

[6]Ibid., p. 221.

[7]Ibid., p. 222

[8]Ibid.

[9]Quarterly Visitor, June 1844, p. 4. The only extant copy of any of the three known papers is this issue of Visitor which is in the archives of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

[10]The History of Keokuk County, Iowa (Des Moines: Union Historical Company, 1880), pp. 459-460.

[11]The Visitor lifted two items from the Bloomington Herald, June 7, 1844, both from page one. One was a news story about "the discoveries of Prof. Morse in Electro Magnetism" in which it was noted that "the electric fluid will travel at the rate of 288,000 miles, equal to nearly 12x the circumference of the globe, in one second." This appeared in the Visitor on page two. The second item from the Herald was an anecdote entitled "Female Delicacy." Stover placed this on his front page. He also took an anecdote from the Burlington Hawk-Eye of June 6, 1844: "Woman is said to be like a Jews harp, because she is nothing without a tongue, and must be pressed to the lips." Stover took this from the Hawk-Eye's front page and placed it on page four of the Visitor with the parenthetical addition, "then she is music for the soul."

[12]News stories in the Visitor consisted of two basic types: local and national. Local news stories included reports of events within the county and the state. National stories covered events which took place outside the state. Features were anecdotes, poems, short tales. Editorials included anything having to do with editorial policy (such as when the paper is scheduled to leave the editor's office), or with social-political judgments about current events.

[13]Quarterly Visitor, June 1844, p.2.

[14]Ibid., p. 4.

[15]Littler, p. 186.

[16]Ibid., pp. 186-187.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Since the Visitor was able to run material gleaned from the Bloomington Herald and Burlington Hawk-Eye less than a month after their publication, it seems likely that newspapers were able to reach Washington within a matter of weeks, if not days.

[24]Dates for this determination were taken from LeRoy G. Pratt, The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa (Mason City, Ia.: Klipto Printing, 1977) and A Bibliography of Iowa Newspapers, 1836-1976 (Des Moines: Iowa State Historical Dept., 1979). The following table provides the average number of years delay between the establishment of those 57 counties and the establishment of their first printed newspapers. The distinctions between county seats are explained in footnote number 26.

	All county seats (57)	Trade/government county seats(15)	Agricultural county seats (42)	Ag. county seats est. before 1840 (6)
Mean	6.35	4.47	7.02	11.33
Std. dev.	5.19	7.64	3.89	3.61 (includes Washington)

[25]Washington County's representatives frequently presented petitions to the territorial and state government to finance construction of or improvements in highways and river crossing. For example, see The Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Iowa (Burlington: Burlington Hawk-Eye Office, 1847), pp. 104, 133. Cf. also Kathy Fisher, In the Beginning There Was Land: A History of Washington County, Iowa (Washington: Washington Historical Society, 1978), pp. 190-191.

[26]The contrast between trade and business centers and agricultural centers is intended to distinguish between those cities which produced or handled goods for export or non-local consumption, and those cities which provided goods and services principally for local consumption. Examples of the former were Burlington, Davenport, Bloomington (or Muscatine), Ft. Madison and Keokuk. Iowa City, the territorial and state capital for a good portion of the period under consideration here, was primarily a government or business center and not an agricultural center. Agricultural centers were cities whose principal business and industries were farm related and local in character.

[27]Cf. A Statistical View of the United States, Compendium of the Seventh Census (Washington; D.C.: 1854).

[28]Several counties in Iowa had different cities competing for the status of county seat. Population, business growth and the existence of a newspaper were important factors in the selection process. Washington however, was never seriously challenged in this regard. See Pratt, The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa for the county seat battles of Black Hawk, Cedar, Clayton, Clinton, Decatur, Jackson, Jones, Marshall, and Muscatine counties.

[29]Cf. the Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 for Johnson County, Iowa, Entries 8, 42, 87, 96, 106, 149, 166, 168, and 181.

[30]A Bibliography of Iowa Newspapers, 1836-1976, pp. 186-191.

[31]One example of Washington's dependency on Iowa City and other cities' printing involved Daniel Stover, editor of the Visitor. In the July 13, 1844 issue of the Iowa Capitol Reporter, ran a report of the "Democratic Convention: Washington County on the 'Look Out'" in which Daniel Stover was listed as the convention secretary. The last resolution listed in the report read: "Resolved, That the Secretary make out the proceedings of this convention, signed by the President and forwarded to the Iowa Capitol Reporter and Burlington Gazette for publication." The president and Stover had signed the

report, July 4, 1844, nine days before its publication. Such a practice may or may not have been commonplace, but in the case of Washington there were no alternatives if speed and wide distribution were desired.

[32]Of the four editors, probably the least is known about Stover. The sources which provided the most information were the extant copy of the Quarterly Visitor and issues of the Iowa Capitol Reporter from December 31, 1842 to July 13, 1844. The Washington County histories of Littler (pp. 29 and 120) and Fisher (p. 107) provided background on both Stover and his brother. The History of Warren County, Iowa (Des Moines: Union Historical Co., 1879) had additional information about the Stover family.

[33]Principal sources for biographic information on James were the Keokuk County History of 1880, Littler's Washington County History, the Portrait and Biographical Album of Washington County, 1887, the extant copy of the Quarterly Visitor, and Keokuk County News, December 14, 1860 to November 15, 1861. James'obituaries appeared in the Keokuk County News, January 16, 1908, p. 1 and January 23, 1908, p.1.

[34]Littler's autobiography appears at the beginning of his History edited by Edna Jones. Other sources include Howard A. Burrell's History of Washington County, Iowa, 2 Vols., (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1909) and his Washington County Press from 1866 to 1869. Littler's county history originally appeared in the Washington Gazette, and his obituary appeared in the Iowa State Register, March 3, 1888, p. 11.

[35]Littler provided a considerable amount of background on McMillan in his county history. Additional sources included Burrell's History of Washington County, Vol. 2, p. 601-604, History of the State of Kansas (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883), p. 1108f, and D.W. Wilder, The Annals of Kansas, New Edition 1541-1885, Reprint (New York: Arno Press, 1975), pp. 657, 670, 676 and 700. McMillan's obituary appeared in the Washington Press, December 14, 1898.

[36]Cf. Howard Burrell, History of Washington County, Iowa, Vol. 2, pp. 601-604.

[37]This possibility was first pointed out to the author by Prof. John Soloski, School of Journalism, University of Iowa.

[38]Washburn, p. 259.